

INTRODUCTION

Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation introduces an academic field of inquiry that never existed because it was extinguished at birth. Its brief life was no accident. Third World studies began in 1968 at San Francisco State College as a revolutionary student movement led by the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). For democracy's sake, the TWLF declared, US higher education must address the masses as well as the ruling elites who predominate in the textbooks and courses peddled by the academy. As a corrective, the TWLF proposed a "Third World curriculum." Instead college administrators and faculty granted the students "ethnic studies," which is a deception but is the term widely recognized today. This textbook revisits the scene of that crime, tracks where the genealogies of Third World and ethnic studies converge and depart, and posits theories and methods that might constitute the field of Third World studies, which is yet to emerge. This, then, is a work of imagination.

To clear the deck, Third World studies is not identity politics, multiculturalism, or intellectual affirmative action. Third World studies is not a gift of white liberals to benighted colored folk to right past wrongs; Third World studies is not a minor note in a grand symphony of US history. Within the United States diversity and pluralist versions of the nation trivialize the intellectual and political claims of Third World studies, reducing power relations and their interventions to cultural celebrations, difference, and competence. Moreover Third World studies is not about teaching

students “to resent or hate other races or classes of people,” as Arizona’s SB 2281 (2010) alleges in legislation that rendered ethnic and Chicana/o studies illegal in the public schools. Accompanying that curbing of intellectual freedom was the banning of books offensive to the ruling class from school libraries.

Rather than a retreat into provincialism Third World studies is about society and the human condition broadly; Third World studies is about the United States in its entirety and its place in the world. The social formation or the forms and movements of society, its structures, relations, and changes over time are the deep and capacious subject matter of Third World studies. Power or agency and its articulations exhibited in the formations of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation as discrepant and intersecting constructions and practices conceive and cultivate the social formation. Attending to the multiplicity of those forces ceaselessly at work in the locations and exercises of power, the social formation demands a complexity in our thinking and action to engage and resist the forces that oppress us all.

Since its institutionalization in US higher education, (post-1968) ethnic studies as an academic subject matter remains largely undefined.¹ There are no agreed upon methodologies and theories particular to and definitive of the field. That absence is astonishing and revealing, considering the hundreds of ethnic studies programs in the United States, thousands of classes taught each year, and tens of thousands of students who enroll in those classes. By contrast, the allied academic fields of feminist and queer studies have a host of books on theories and methods that define and animate them.

Ethnic studies as we now know it has resisted a unified approach mainly because, in the name of self-determination, the field began as discrete, separate, and, some claimed, exceptional formations of African American studies, American Indian studies, Asian American studies, and Chicana/o or Latina/o studies. Self-determination, the key demand of the TWLF, came to mean for (post-1968) ethnic studies each group speaking for and about itself mainly within the US nation-state. Rare, as a consequence, are institutionalized arrangements of comparative ethnic studies; most segregate the faculty, curricula, and students of each racialized group. That pattern mirrors and, I believe, succumbs to the organization of knowledge by distinctive disciplines and fields with their own tribal members, hierarchies, histories, literatures, cultures, and professional journals and organizations.

In that sense abandoning Third World studies for (post-1968) ethnic studies can be correctly called identity politics and intellectual segregation. I count myself among that generation of scholars. I once wrote that Asian American studies was by, about, and for Asian Americans; as far as I was concerned those

outside that community mattered little to the field I helped create. I have long since abandoned that position, which is commonly called cultural nationalism. Despite its contrary claims, cultural nationalism subscribes to European national or racialized categories, often to the marginalization of gender, sexuality, and class, and its principal pivots are the relations between (a binary construction) whites, the dominant group, and nonwhites, the subordinate group. Black (or brown, red, and yellow) power is a potent antidote to the poison of white supremacy, but it follows and is in reaction to white power and is accordingly limited by its model and prior condition.

I appreciate the centrality of African Americans to US history and culture, but I also apprehend as oppressive the white-and-black racialized binary. While I agree with the distinction of indigeneity for Native Americans, including American Indians and Pacific Islanders, I deny the claims of priority and possession even as I reject the legitimacy of imperial expansion. I know conquest, the imposition of national borders, and migrant labor particularizes the Latinx² experience, and only Asians were classified as “aliens ineligible to citizenship” from 1790 to 1952. Yet I hold that there is more that connects than divides our struggles for self-determination and freedom. Third World studies constitutes a unified, coherent field of study. I intend to show those propositions in the pages that follow.

A brief explanation of how this text came into being. I had the rare opportunity to teach “comparative ethnic studies” at Columbia University. Although in Harlem and New York City, Columbia’s entry into (post-1968) ethnic studies was inexcusably late: in 1993, when Manning Marable began the Institute for Research in African-American Studies, and in 1999, when I became the founding director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. However, freed from the turf wars that were common on many campuses with long-standing (post-1968) ethnic studies programs, I was at liberty to install a curriculum attentive to the particularities of people of color—African, Asian, Native American, and Latinx—and one that compared those racial formations across their divides while integrating them with related theories of gender, sexuality, class, and nation. But without faculty trained in comparative ethnic studies I had the responsibility of devising and teaching that introductory course on the subject.

At first I took a “great books” approach to the class, assigning authors I had read during the beginnings of (post-1968) ethnic studies, including Frantz Fanon, Karl Marx, Mao Zedong, and Paulo Freire. The approach failed to hang together because the readings had no theoretical organization. Thus began my search for theory. After all, I knew, all disciplines had theories,

methods, and subject matter particular to them, defining them as autonomous fields of study. This introductory book is the outcome of that extended, exhilarating pursuit. There were, of necessity, numerous iterations resulting from self-criticism and dialogue with my patient, discerning students. This text is the written form of my oral lectures; always delivered without notes, my lectures are oral versions of my notes, handwritten from my readings. Readings, notes, lectures, textbook—oral and written traditions—these I consider the sum total of my nearly forty-year labor in and commitment to the subject and striving I herein call Third World studies.

The Book

I was born and grew up on a sugar plantation in Hawai'i. My parents, like their parents, were sugar plantation workers. The plantation, with its social hierarchies of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and nation, was the start of my education. My world beyond the cane fields was, in Mark Twain's memorable words, the "loveliest fleet of islands." In plain view from my home was Pu'uloa, called Pearl Harbor and chosen by US militarists for their navy; the anchorage facilitated US imperial ambitions in the Pacific. Gone was the independent kingdom of Hawai'i; greatly diminished primarily by introduced diseases were its native peoples; and surging numbers of Asian migrant laborers tended the vast tropical estates of sugar and pineapple. I came of age in that social formation.

After graduating from a Christian mission high school, unlike most of my peers I was fortunate to continue my education. California was not yet a Third World state, and the US war in Southeast Asia was raging. As an undergraduate I majored in history, and as a graduate student at UCLA I studied African history. To escape the draft I joined the Peace Corps, which sent me for training among African Americans in Frogmore, South Carolina, and stationed me in Botswana, southern Africa. A former British colony, the independent black-ruled nation of Botswana was at the time hemmed in by white supremacist states to its south, north, east, and west. Apartheid South Africa dominated the region. Living and working for three years in Botswana was transformative, and I returned to UCLA and back to Botswana to complete my studies in African history.

Meanwhile students had gained (post-1968) ethnic studies, and I was among the first cohort of graduate students at UCLA in Asian American studies. My PhD, though, was in African history, which was the dominion of whites mainly and a few blacks. I might have been the first Asian recipient of that de-

gree in the United States and failed to land a job in African history. Instead, in affirmation of identity politics, I secured a position in Asian American studies and have been so appointed throughout my academic career. The formations I count as central to my education and consciousness remain colonial Hawai'i and postcolonial Botswana. Spatially Hawai'i and Botswana are earth's antipodes, but intellectually they connect and cohere within my subject-self.

Authors write from their subject positions. In that sense their writings are autobiographical. There are still those who reject that proposition; they believe scholars can conceive of truths and that artists create works transcendent of their time and place. They refuse to see the writer and social contexts embedded within the text. Instead I call your attention to my presence in this work, especially because the Third World curriculum proposed in 1968 was neither explained nor implemented. My version of Third World studies is accordingly idiosyncratic, though not completely. There are guideposts.

Clearly the Third World Liberation Front's course of study was directed at liberation, called self-determination. The Third World curriculum was designed to create "a new humanity, a new humanism, a New World Consciousness," in the TWLF's words, lifted from the Third World writer and revolutionary Frantz Fanon. Certainly the subjects were peoples of the Third World—Africa, Asia (and Oceania), and Latin America (and the Caribbean)—but also of the First and Second Worlds, the so-called West (capitalist world) and East (socialist world). In those worlds were the oppressed, the masses, the earth's "wretched," so named by Fanon, and they are the subject of chapter 1.

Notable are the students' subjectivities as members of the *Third World* and not *national* liberation fronts, as was the case in Algeria and Vietnam, two revolutions that inspired their movement for educational transformation. The Third World referred not to nation-states but to regions, areas of the world once conquered, colonized, and impoverished by Europeans. In 1900 the African American scholar and activist W. E. B. Du Bois delineated that global color line as the problem of the twentieth century, which was colonialism (material relations) and racism (discourse), the ideology that upheld white supremacy and nonwhite subservience. Third World studies descends from that lineage of anticolonial, antiracist struggles identified and described by Du Bois, among others. That global contest was waged over power, of course, the power to know and the power to rule. The oppressed and their relations to power, then, are the subjects of Third World studies.

Racist discourse endorsed and advanced European imperialism that ruled the world for about four hundred years, beginning in about the sixteenth century. About the time of Du Bois's color line declaration, racists warned against

a peril produced by colonialism: the uplift and stirring of nonwhite peoples and their migration to the imperial centers of Europe and the United States. Fields of study to contain and mitigate the problem were race relations and ethnic studies. In the United States sociologists at the University of Chicago were the foremost proponents of both race relations and ethnic studies. The former sought to understand and control the challenges posed by nonwhites to white rule, while the latter conceived of ethnicities or cultures as the way to preserve white supremacy by assimilating problem minorities into the dominant group. This brand of ethnic studies I refer to as (Chicago) ethnic studies.

The sociologist Robert E. Park, a leading figure in race relations and (Chicago) ethnic studies, learned race relations while serving as Booker T. Washington's research assistant at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Washington was the primary architect of the Atlanta Compromise (1895), which promised African American docility and submission in exchange for white funding for black education. He was also a dutiful student of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a son of missionaries to Hawai'i and the founder of the Hampton Institute, which educated African Americans and American Indians to work with their hands and not minds. Race relations and (Chicago) ethnic studies, as instruments of colonialism, thus were antithetical to the emancipatory aims of Third World studies.

But at its inception Third World studies gained institutionalization as (Chicago) ethnic studies and, like the independence movements in the Third World, the field turned to (cultural) nationalism and the nation-state. Chapter 2 considers that retreat and surrender, which betrayed the broadminded understandings of the Pan-African Conference of 1900 and the African and Asian meeting at Bandung in 1955. The latter, convened in the midst of the Cold War, expressed a remarkable vision of a world free from racism and colonial rule and with the achievement of lasting world peace. Contrarily Third World independence installed the sovereign nation-state, patterned on the European model with an elite ruling over the oppressed, exploited masses. Similarly in the United States, cultural nationalism was upheld as the highest expression of self-determination and as an end in itself, not as a strategic, albeit necessary, step toward liberation. At the same time, many leading cultural nationalists were staunch internationalists; they knew that imperialism abroad consorted with social relations at home.

The sovereign nation-state is both spatial and social. It is marked by borders within which rulers rule over people. In the narrative of nation the people were related biologically and were thus referred to as races. They shared a

common descent and were of one blood. In addition, under patriarchy men occupied the public sphere or the state because of their alleged virtues, while women were confined to the domestic sphere because of their presumed deficiencies. Families constituted the nation, and sexuality and marriage were thus state prerogatives. Under capitalism inviolate was the bedrock of possession or property, including land, goods, and dependents—women, children, slaves. The nation-state accordingly was designed to install and interpellate hierarchies of race, gender, sexuality, class, and (national) citizenship. Those relations of power privilege the few and oppress the many.

As the old imperial order crumbled and colonies gained independence, a new empire, a world-system of nation-states, emerged. The internecine First and Second World Wars, waged by Europeans over national sovereignty and imperial holdings, proved to be the old empire's undoing. Under the new dispensation global peace was pursued through instruments like the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, both composed of nation-states bound by juridical agreements. At the same time, the League of Nations opposed antiracism and decolonization, and only in 1960 did the UN declare that colonization violates fundamental human rights. Capitalism financed and profited from that hegemony of nation-states, which the United States called multilateralism. The world economy was restructured through institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and international trade agreements and organizations, producing economic, political, and cultural dependency as well as, across the color line, generating immense wealth for the few and abject poverty for the many.

The Third World Liberation Front's choice of a spatial and ideological affiliation with the Third World and its peoples, not the nation-state, suggests a curriculum built around the discourses and manifestations of imperialism and colonialism globally, the subjects of chapters 3 and 4. Imperialism, or extraterritorial expansion, was impelled by capitalism and underwritten by discourses to impose order and subjection. From ancient Greece emerged ideas of geographical and biological determinism; the former conceived of life forms, including humans, as shaped by geography and climate; the latter, as decreed by biology or blood. The (European) Enlightenment demarcated the earth by continents—Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—and those divides delineated the four major races with their particular natures. Whether determined by geography or inheritance and blood, the superior race possessed virtues and hence rights over the inferior races. That project of segregating, naming, and attributing, the discourse of taxonomy, was an imperial exertion of power over the planet and all of its inhabitants.

That language and ideology (discourses) of rule materialized the world-system, which tracks the career of capitalism. Mercantile or trade-based capitalism produced profits, and, beginning in the eleventh century with the Italian city-states, trade with Asia was the principal means for acquiring wealth and influence. The Atlantic world eclipsed the Mediterranean around the fifteenth century. With foundations in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic perfected the arts of conquest and colonization. Enslaved Africans supplied the labor for sugar plantations on islands off the West African coast and later in the Caribbean. African slaves and sugar sold in Europe provided capital to finance the long and arduous journey around Africa to the Indian Ocean and Asia. Across the Atlantic, American Indians, after their conquest, mined the gold and silver that enriched Spain, and the bullion was traded in the Pacific world for Asian goods. Settler colonies secured the imperial, oceanic highways, and capital, labor (migrant labor), and culture moved across the world-system.

In that designed and imposed global web the core accumulated wealth at the expense of its peripheries, resulting in Europe's development and the Third World's underdevelopment. Those connections were related and structured; they were not commerce in the usual sense of exchange, but exploitation. A Spanish colonizer called the highly profitable traffic "an inheritance," gesturing to the privileges of blood and race. Colonies existed to generate wealth for their owners. Conquest was both material and discursive, and it involved military might but also sexual violence. Rape of the land and people, mainly women, was a method of subjugation and the means for producing and reproducing dependencies. Language was a crucial weapon in the colonizer's arsenal. Native languages and therewith ideologies were removed, replaced with the conqueror's tongue, producing colonized minds. Without a consciousness of the subject-self, self-determination was more easily denied.

Like language, education, considered in chapter 5, is an apparatus of the state to colonize and mold useful, docile subjects and citizens, but it also can enable resistance to oppression and exploitation. It was therefore a battleground for what some called the culture or canon wars of the 1980s and 1990s, sparked in part by the Third World Liberation Front's 1968 strike. However, long before that historic student uprising, American education was established to manufacture preachers and teachers to school the untutored masses, rendering them safe for democracy. White men from the elite assumed that (white man's) burden, while white women were at first excluded and later nurtured in schools for mothers of the republic to reproduce the next generation of pliant citizens. Missionaries similarly tended to the maternal instruction of childlike American Indians, and their Foreign Mission School, established in

1816, civilized into subservience native peoples, including American Indians, Pacific Islanders, and Asians.

Samuel Armstrong found his calling in that ministry to the republic's "darkies"—Hawaiians, African Americans, and American Indians—to defer their dreams of equality and teach them to remain contentedly within their assigned places. Another educator, Richard Henry Pratt, was like Armstrong a commander of African American troops during the Civil War. He admired Armstrong's pedagogy, sent some of his American Indian war captives to Hampton, and established the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Pratt's educational mission was, in his words, to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man." Armstrong agreed and gave that brand of miseducation a practical rationale: it is cheaper to civilize Indians than to exterminate them. As the African American educator Carter G. Woodson discovered, when you control a person's thinking, you will not need to fear any opposition or uprising. Miseducation inculcates obedience.

But education can also inspire rebellion. That was a motivation for masters to forbid literacy and learning among their enslaved laborers. The master's tools can enslave as well as free. Students of the Third World Liberation Front had freedom in mind when they engaged in the fight for a "national culture," which, Fanon explained, was nothing less than the creation of a people who had been denied a history and culture. Consciousness, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire added, can be obtained through a "pedagogy of the oppressed," which humanizes teachers and students alike and disrupts the relation of teacher as colonizer and student as colonized. Contrary to miseducation, that dialogic pedagogy generates consciousness and intervention, critical thinking and action, creating subjects (not objects) who are agents of history, rendering them "truly human."

Discussion of the formation of that subject-self or subjectification follows in chapter 6. While Freirian consciousness grounds the subject-self within society, humanism of the (European) Enlightenment extols the primacy of the self over self's others. "I think, therefore I am" is the optimistic, positivist formulation of the self—the center—and with that consciousness, humanism. Humans, the discourse maintained, have the ability to shape their own destinies and possessed the power to rule over and even subdue nature. Not all humans, however, were equal; in fact nonwhites and women might approach but could never achieve the status and rights of white men. That humanism consorted with racism, patriarchy, and imperialism to justify and advance nationalism, conquest, colonization, and the capitalist world-system. Although the Third World Liberation Front and Fanon advocated a "new humanism,"

whether old or new, humanism arises from within that discourse of white men and the colonizers. Accordingly even a new humanism might not result in liberation and self-determination, the objects of a Third World curriculum.

Post-Enlightenment intellectuals offer us trenchant criticisms of humanism's sovereign subjects. Humans are not completely autonomous. Marx argued that the relations of production shape consciousness, and Freud revealed the unconscious dimensions of the self that are inaccessible to thought. Saussure contended that nothing exists outside of language; thus language structures consciousness and the subject-self. Lacan found that the subject is created through language in a process called subjectification, and Gramsci, Althusser, and Foucault point to the state and its apparatuses in the production of the subject-self. Subjects are made through discourse, which is language and ideology, Foucault explained. Those insights of structuralism and poststructuralism, not humanism, supply Third World studies with its analytical category: the subject-self of self-determination.

As noted, race was the distinguishing mark of race relations, culture, of (Chicago) ethnic studies, and both discourses functioned to maintain the relations of power. By the time the Third World Liberation Front was established, (Chicago) ethnic studies was the prevailing ideology in US society. That is, races were reduced to cultures, and the celebration of ethnicity and diversity was the ticket to the big tent of inclusion, citizenship, and rights—the perceived goals of the civil rights movement. For the ruling class ethnicity ensured domestic tranquility. As the US sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant explain, the theory of racial formation, examined in chapter 7, arose in opposition to that dominance of the ethnic model in sociology, and it swept the newly instituted field misnamed “ethnic studies” (post-1968). Racial formation theory contends that race is persistent, central, and irreducible within US history and society because race is a creation of and, in turn, exerts influences over economic, political, and social forces—the sum total of society and the nation-state. At the same time race is a social construction and is mobile, always in formation.

In a complementary work the social and political philosopher Charles W. Mills argues that philosophy, like US sociology, glosses over race despite its long-standing and pervasive presence in the writings of major figures of the (European) Enlightenment, including Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. That failure, which is an “episteme of ignorance,” circulates within the “racial contract” that is at the heart of not merely modern social contract theory but the regimes of slavery and colonialism. By “racial contract” Mills refers to the assumption of superior whites and inferior nonwhites that enshrines privi-

leges for whites and bestows subservience on nonwhites. Whiteness accordingly is not simply a race or color but a set of power relations—the discursive and material powers of whites over nonwhites.

Whiteness in fact is the starting point of racial formation theory; whites named themselves and their inferior others. Critical race theory builds upon that insight. The *critical* in critical race theory arises from a critique of structuralism, materialism, and positivism in the disillusionment that followed the twentieth century's world wars. The nineteenth century's faith in science, capitalism, and human progress was undermined by those European conflicts, and the sovereign nation-state and its instruments were revealed as oppressive to the masses. Marxism and socialism, critical theory believed, offered antidotes to the poisons of capitalism and materialism, and deconstruction in literary criticism considered texts, like self and society, as constructed and mediated. Critical legal studies adopted critical theory's positions on power, ideology, discourse, and the material conditions, but its failure to consider race and racism as central to the constitution of legal theory and practice led to the rise of critical race theory. As a pivotal apparatus of the nation-state, the law, while complex and contingent, creates race and racial meanings and confers privileges and poverties, according to critical race theory. Whiteness, then, is the protected category, although assumed and thereby rendered invisible in the racial contract. Critical white studies aims to expose that racial contract and deconstruct white power by making it visible.

While a central axis, race is not the entirety of the social formation or society and the locations and articulations of power. Third World women (organic) intellectuals led the search for a new language to express and theory to explain their everyday experiences as women of color, queers, the poor, and migrants. The problems they faced were more nuanced and complicated than the answers provided by racial formation theory alone. In 1968 the African American feminist Frances Beale outlined the impact of racism, sexism, and capitalism on the lives of African American women; she formed the Black Women's Liberation Caucus that evolved into the Third World Women's Alliance because "the complexities of intersecting oppressions [are] more resilient than the distinctions of the particular groups." That is, women of color and Third World women faced similar forces of oppression and exploitation that cut across racialized divides. Moreover, Beale held, a Third World consciousness would enable a more robust political movement for social change than one based on cultural nationalism. That revolutionary idea is the subject of chapter 8.

Beale's "intersecting oppressions," later theorized as intersectionalism, are

the essential feature of my social formation theory. It is important to note that a Third World consciousness sustains the theory and that intersectionalism draws from the lived experiences of the subjects of Third World studies—the oppressed, the masses. Social formation theory purports to explain the structures of society in their totality and their changes over space/time. The theory understands power or agency as the means by which societies are organized and changed, and social structures involve primarily race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. Those discourses materialize social categories and hierarchies such as white and nonwhite, man and woman, straight and queer, owner and worker, and citizen and alien. While power is suspect, diffuse, and constantly in motion, it has abilities and effects. Social formation theory thus insists on locating power to name the oppressors and the oppressed and to create alternative, liberating discourses and practices.

Self-determination, the goal of Third World studies, requires a strategic mastery of the language and ideologies of the ruling class to engage and upend oppression. But liberation also demands discourses and practices not of the master's creation. The idea of intersectionalism and its progeny, social formation theory, are attempts to articulate new languages, ideologies, and practices, which is the future of Third World studies. Chapter 9 concludes this version of Third World studies with two syntheses that reveal the particularities and ties that bind across the imposed divides of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation.

Synthesis 1 identifies some theories of relevance to Third World studies drawn from feminist, queer, and (post-1968) ethnic studies. Feminist and (post-1968) ethnic studies form parallels in their movements for social change. Both began as the pursuit of integration and civil rights within the nation-state, and strands in both abandoned that focus for self-determination and the locations and articulations of power in society and the world. Performance, invisibility of the normal, and the making of subjects, as explained by feminist and queer scholars, enhance our understanding of subjectivity. In comparative (post-1968) ethnic studies, land and labor constitute the common ground, while Native American studies underscores the importance of indigeneity and sovereignty; African American studies, transnational community (Pan-Africanism); Asian American studies, migrant labor; and Chicana/o studies, borderlands. Those discourses and practices unite as well as point to the particularities of each field, and they clarify and explain the subjects of Third World studies.

Third World studies, as Synthesis 2 shows, engages discourses of the ruling class in the colonizer's tongue, of necessity, but also in creolized languages.

In that the Third World appropriated First World discourses of sovereignty, equality, and self-determination, which freed even as they imprisoned; (European) humanism was never intended to embrace Third World peoples. In fact by tracing the intellectual histories of discourses such as nation and race, imperialism and colonialism, modernity and postmodernity, we see clearly their workings in the material relations and conditions of exploitation and oppression, the elite and the masses. Rising from the old must emerge novel, truly liberating discourses and material conditions. To rephrase the Third World Liberation Front's 1968 objective for its Third World studies curriculum, Third World studies is designed to create and nurture "a new language, a new ideology, a new world consciousness." That revolutionary conclusion is the ambition of this introduction to Third World studies reborn.

Summary

In 1998 and 1999, when a colleague proposed Latina/o studies and I, Asian American studies at Columbia University, both undergraduate majors were quickly approved. They were almost certainly seen as ethnic or cultural studies of groups that added to the colors of multicultural Columbia and America. Later, by contrast, when I proposed a major in comparative ethnic studies and explained the field as a study of power in society, the college dean and chair of the undergraduate committee on instruction queried me about that claim. "What is power?" he chided me. While the dean might have been incapable of apprehending power in the abstract, he clearly knew how to wield it, keeping the proposal in limbo for three years by requiring evidence of the field's academic legitimacy and demanding several revisions of the proposal. The dean likely saw the study of power from the perspective of comparative ethnic studies as potentially disruptive of the extant relations of power.

I recount that fairly recent past to underscore the disparate receptions of (Chicago) ethnic studies and what I herein call Third World studies. That contemporary response, it is significant to recall, mirrored the actions of faculty and administrators in 1968, when the Third World Liberation Front proposed a Third World curriculum. They welcomed race relations and (Chicago) ethnic studies while turning their backs to Third World studies. They had accomplices in (post-1968) ethnic studies faculty who fled the Third World for the United States, seeking asylum in civil rights and the nation-state. Cultural nationalism and segregation into cells of races named and interpellated by those with power dominated the field called ethnic studies (post-1968). Race was the defining subject matter. In that acquiescence and insofar as they have

become ends, like the independent Third World nation-state, and not a strategic choice and a temporary position in the war against oppression, we have willingly complied with our hegemony and subordination.

I must stress nonetheless that there is a difference between the ethnic studies of Robert Park and Chicago sociology and the misnamed ethnic studies of 1968. In the 1960s black (and brown, red, and yellow) power threatened white supremacy, even as independent Third World nation-states opposed European colonialism and racism. Cultural nationalism and the nation-state were effective vehicles toward liberation, but only as instruments in transit. Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, conceived of that strategy as a mobile war of positions.

Indeed not all post-1968 ethnic studies scholars saw race and the nation-state as the sole or even primary subjects of their field, and in recent years, to distinguish themselves from the (post-1968) ethnic studies that has become the prevailing norm, some refer to their scholarship and practice as “critical ethnic studies.” Moreover new generations of scholars have published innovative and courageous works cutting across disciplines and the social formation that, while they might not have been written under the sign of (post-1968) ethnic studies, have advanced the field of (critical) ethnic studies. Liberation remains the object of those varieties of post-1968 and critical ethnic studies, which can be seen as an appropriation of the Chicago name and variety. Yet it is useful to remind ourselves of the origins and purposes of (Chicago) ethnic studies and the imperative to abandon the master’s language and ideology for more liberating taxonomies and discourses of our choosing and design.

Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation is a conjuring, a haunting from a past that refuses to die. The spirit of the global Third World anticolonial struggles for self-determination and antiracism lives on. In this articulation of the field, Third World studies retains the original drive for universal liberation (self-determination) against all forms of oppression, material and discursive. This introduction merely starts a conversation. As such *Third World Studies* invites dialogue and engagement, agreement and dissent. Only then, in the formation and practice of ideology and language, will Third World studies compose a field of inquiry and action worthy of its student founders and their magnificent, enduring cause and movement, making history.